



State of Rhode Island
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminister Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 5e
August 17, 2021

Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

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TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner *A. Infante*

RE: **Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy - Request for Major Charter Amendment**

Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy (Nowell) is a statewide independent charter public school located in Providence. Nowell's mission is "to ensure that Rhode Island's pregnant, parenting, and underserved youth graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for success in college, career and family life." The school opened in 2013 and currently serves 160 students in grade nine through grade twelve. The school is authorized to enroll up to 320 students statewide with 160 students at their Providence campus, 80 students at their proposed East Providence campus, and 80 students at their proposed Warwick campus. The majority of the school's students reside in Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls. 95.2% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged, 31.9% of students are multilingual learners, and 20% of students are on an Individualized Learning Plan (IEP).

In 2018-19, the school earned a one-star designation, and was identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement in 2018-19 due to low Achievement and Growth, and low Graduation Rate. Nowell was granted a two-year extension to their charter in Fall 2020. Previously, the school was granted a three-year renewal term in Fall 2017. The school will go through the renewal process in Fall 2022.

Amendment Request

Nowell has submitted a major amendment to their charter proposing to consolidate the unused seats at the East Providence and Warwick campuses to increase the number of students served, to 320, at their Providence campus.

Nowell has requested to serve:

- 180 students statewide at their Providence campus during the 2021-22 school year.
- 220 students statewide at their Providence campus during the 2022-23 school year.
- 280 students statewide at their Providence campus during the 2023-24 school year.
- 320 students statewide at their Providence campus during the 2024-25 school year.

In accordance with 2.3.1.A of the Council's Regulations Governing Rhode Island Public Charter Schools, such major changes in the school's operations require the action of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to reject the amendment request by the Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy that would permit the school to serve 320 students, at their Providence campus.

Major Amendment Summary - Charter Schools

Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy

Enrolling Communities: Statewide

Grades: 9-12

Location of School: Providence

Charter Type: Independent

Mission: *The mission of the Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy is to ensure that Rhode Island’s pregnant, parenting, and underserved youth graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for success in college, career, and family life.*

School Overview:

Since opening in 2013, Nowell Leadership Academy has served over 900 students from across Rhode Island, and graduated over 240 students. In June 2020, Nowell Leadership Academy moved into its new facility at 150 Washington Street in Providence.

Nowell Academy draws from students statewide, with 67% of student coming from the city of Providence. 16% of students are from Pawtucket, 10% are from Central Falls, and the rest of the current student body is from either Cranston, North Providence, or Woonsocket. 95.2% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged, and the school serves a large population of multi-lingual learners (31.9%) and students who have Individualized Education Plans for special education services (20%). Currently all students are attending the Providence campus.

Amendment Request:

Pursuant to Regulation 2.3.1.A of the RI Board of Regents Regulations Governing Charter Schools, Nowell Leadership Academy requests permission from the K-12 Council on Education to consolidate the unused seats at the East Providence and Warwick campuses to increase the number of students served to 320 at their Providence campus.

Nowell has requested to serve:

- 180 students statewide at their Providence campus during the 2021-22 school year.
- 220 students statewide at their Providence campus during the 2022-23 school year.
- 280 students statewide at their Providence campus during the 2023-24 school year.
- 320 students statewide at their Providence campus during the 2024-25 school year.

Evaluation Procedures

For charter schools seeking amendments, Rhode Island Department of Education’s (RIDE) Office of Charter Schools looks to answer three key questions:

1. *Does the charter public school have a track record of sustained high performance?*
2. *Is there sufficient demand for the school?*
3. *Has the school developed an operational plan that will enable it to expand with fidelity?*

Telephone (401)222-4600 **Fax** (401)222-6178 **TTY** (800)745-5555 **Voice** (800)745-6575 **Website:** www.ride.ri.gov

The Board of Regents does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability.

To evaluate academic performance, RIDE conducts a comprehensive review of available evidence, including RIDE school star ratings, PSAT and SAT proficiency, growth rates, graduation rates, and results from recent charter renewal decisions.

To evaluate demand, RIDE examines lottery data over multiple years to assess whether the school has sufficient demand to meet proposed enrollment targets.

To evaluate a school's operational plan, RIDE reviews board meeting minutes, school materials (including staffing plans and budgets), and other strategic planning documents. The purpose of the review is to understand whether the school will be able to carry out its expansion plan

Commissioner's Recommendation:

At the present time, the Commissioner recommends that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education deny the proposed major amendment request from the Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy.

Academic Performance: Nowell Leadership Academy was classified as a one-star school in 2018, and 2019. In 2019, the school's Providence campus was identified as needing comprehensive support and intervention (CSI) school meaning that the school performed in the lowest 5% of schools statewide in achievement, growth, and graduation rate.

Demand: In Spring 2020, Nowell reported receiving 102 applications for 34 open seats. In Spring 2021, Nowell reported receiving 130 applications for 43 open seats.

Operational Planning: Nowell has provided an acceptable operational plan for expanding their Providence campus, the details of which has been comprehensively reviewed and meets expectations.



Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy Charter Local Impact Analysis for Charter Major Amendment Request Local Community: Statewide

Proposal Overview

Proposed Charter Overview			
Charter Type:	Independent	Year First Opened:	2013
Location of School(s):	Providence	Currently Approved Grades and Seats:	Grades 9-12 160 seats in Providence, 80 seats in East Providence, 80 seats in Warwick
Enrolling Communities:	Statewide	Total New Seats Requested:	0 This serves as a major amendment request to consolidate the 80 seats from East Providence and the 80 seats from Warwick into one location in Providence

Summary of Proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy submitted a major amendment to their charter, consolidating their full student body of 320 students at their Providence campus. The school is currently approved to serve 160 students at their Providence campus and is approved to serve 80 students in East Providence and 80 students in Warwick. The school will continue to draw students at a state-wide scale.

Current Approved Enrollment and Major Amendment Request				
Year	Current Grades	Total Approved Enrollment (Providence Campus)	Proposed Grades Added/Changed	Proposed Enrollment after Major Amendment (Providence Campus)
2021-22	Grades 9-12	160	N/A	180
2022-23	Grades 9-12	160	N/A	220
2023-24	Grades 9-12	160	N/A	280
2024-25 (at scale)	Grades 9-12	160	N/A	320



Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy Charter

Local Impact Analysis for Charter Major Amendment Request

Local Community: Statewide

Major Amendment Request Detail			
LEA	Currently Approved Enrollment (Providence Campus) ⁱ	Current % of Total Charter Approved Enrollment	Projected Net Increase in Students from Major Amendment at scale (Providence Campus) ⁱⁱ
Nowell	160	-	+160
Enrolling Communities			
Central Falls	16	10%	+16
Cranston	3	2%	+2
North Providence	1	1%	-
Pawtucket	26	16%	+18
Providence	107	67%	+124
Woonsocket	7	4%	-

Enrollment Assumptions & Comparisonⁱⁱⁱ

Demographics of Enrolling Communities				
LEA	% Economically Disadvantaged	% Multi-Lingual Learners	% Differently-abled students	% Minority students
Nowell	95.2	31.9	20	88.1
State	47.7	10.7	15.7	44.8
Projected Enrolling Communities				
Central Falls	95.0	48.0	20.8	85.7
Cranston	43.1	7.4	15.3	50.1
North Providence	46.6	4.7	17.0	43.7
Pawtucket	72.4	15.0	17.1	63.9
Providence	84.5	33.1	14.7	91.8
Woonsocket	74.5	9.9	28.3	55.1

How does the charter’s projected enrollment fit within the overall portfolio of enrolling districts?						
Enrollment Category	CF	Cran.	N. Prov.	Pawt.	Prov.	Woon.
Total # of students enrolled in each district	2,878	10,302	3584	8,730	23,836	5,984



Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy Charter Local Impact Analysis for Charter Major Amendment Request Local Community: Statewide

Nowell's at-scale enrollment as a % of each enrolling community's enrollment	1.1	0.05	0.03	0.5	1.0	0.1
Total # of students residing in each enrolling community ^{iv}	4,534	11,379	4052	11,052	29,650	6,762
Nowell's at-scale enrollment as a % of total # of students residing in each enrolling community	0.7	0.04	0.02	0.4	0.8	0.1

Educational & Programmatic Impact Analysis^v

2019 SAT 11th Grade Performance Comparison with Charter, District, and State Results

SAT Results	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Average Scale Score	% Students Meets/Exceeds	Average Scale Score	% Students Meets/Exceeds
Nowell	355	**	348	**
State	483	50.5	474	31.2
Central Falls	390	14.1	386	6.1
Cranston	474	49.1	458	23.8
North Providence	481	49.6	472	26.1
Pawtucket	424	27.8	414	9.4
Providence	425	25.5	414	14.8
Woonsocket	442	33.1	420	12.5

***Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because greater than 95% of students did not meet expectations.*

2019 SAT Subgroup Performance Comparison

SAT Results Demographic Breakdown	English Language Arts (% Meets/Exceeds)				Mathematics (% Meets/Exceeds)			
	All	Econ Disadv.	Multi-Lingual	Differently-abled	All	Econ Disadv.	Multi-Lingual	Differently-abled
Nowell	**	**	*	*	**	*	*	*
State	50.5	30	7.93	9.1	31.2	13.5	6.28	5.02
Central Falls	14.1	12.6	**	**	6.1	5.8	**	**
Cranston	49.1	32.0	**	10.5	23.8	13.9	**	**



Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy Charter Local Impact Analysis for Charter Major Amendment Request Local Community: Statewide

North Providence	49.6	39.1	*	**	26.1	17.4	*	**
Pawtucket	27.8	25.3	**	**	9.4	6.3	**	**
Providence	17.22	15.2	5.5	11.4	11.92	10.4	**	**
Woonsocket	33.1	22.6	**	7.8	12.5	6.2	**	**

- **Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because the minimum reporting size requirement (10 students) is not met.*
- ***Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because greater than 95% of students did not meet expectations.*

Student Demand Analysis for Grade 9-12 Charter Seats ^{vi}							
	Nowell	CF	Cran.	N. Prov.	Pawt.	Prov.	Woon.
Number of 2020-21 Charter Applications by community for grades 9-12:	102	624	156	32	720	2,048	110
Number of 2020-21 Charter Seats Offered by community for grades 9-12:	34	86	47	*	98	266	17
What % of 2020-21 grades 9-12 lottery applicants by community were offered a seat?	33.3%	14%	30%	-	14%	13%	15%



Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy Charter Local Impact Analysis for Charter Major Amendment Request Local Community: Statewide

Fiscal Impact Analysis

Educational funding dollars follow each child to the school of their choice. The following analysis projects the total amount of funding that would follow students to the school of their choice, commensurate with the size of the requested major amendment.

FY2024-25 (When Nowell is at-scale under the Major Amendment Request) Pupil Funding Projections					
LEA	Projected Net Increase in Students from Major Amendment at scale (Providence Campus)	Projected per-pupil Local Share Funding for each student ^{vi}	Projected per-pupil total funding (local+state+federal) for each student ^{vii}	Projected Total Pupil Funding, commensurate with the Major Amendment Request	Projected Total Withholding for Fixed or Unique Costs (to district) ^{viii}
Central Falls	+16	\$2,729 per-pupil	\$18,004 per-pupil	\$288,064	\$3,280
Cranston	+2	\$8,374 per-pupil	\$17,040 per-pupil	\$34,080	\$1,260
Pawtucket	+18	\$2,829 per-pupil	\$16,542 per-pupil	\$297,756	\$3,834
Providence	+124	\$4,628 per-pupil	\$19,034 per-pupil	\$2,360,216	\$39,804

Key implication: RIDE projects on an annual basis by FY2024-25, commensurate with the major amendment requested by Nowell at-scale, total funding of \$2,980,116 to be generated by students across Rhode Island. RIDE projects this \$2,980,116 to be generated by students distributed as projected in Nowell’s major amendment proposal. Students from Providence would generate over 79% of the \$2,980,116. Students from each respective remaining community would all generate less than 11% per community of the \$2,980,116.

These projections reflect no net increase in the number of students from Woonsocket, Barrington, East Greenwich, East Providence, Lincoln, or North Providence. Total enrollment from these districts projects to eight total students in FY 2024-25.

ⁱ Current at-scale enrollment based off 2019-20 Average Daily Membership

ⁱⁱ Future year enrollment projections by community based off of projected enrollment in the proposal

ⁱⁱⁱ Enrollment Assumptions and Comparison based off 10/1/19 reported data publicly available through RIDE’s FRED database.

^{iv} Inclusive of independent and catholic schools as available through RIDE’s FRED database.

^v Academic Outcome data is based off published assessment results for 2019 available through the public Rhode Island Assessment Data Portal. *Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because the minimum reporting size requirement (10 students) is not met. **Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because greater than 95% of students did not meet expectations.

^{vi} Assumes constant Local per-pupil funding, constant net of withholdings for fixed or unique costs.

^{vii} Assumes constant state per-pupil funding. Federal funding assumed constant and based off district averages

^{viii} Withholding for fixed or unique costs is the greater of: a) 7% of the per-pupil local share funding; or, b) the per-pupil value of the district's fixed or unique costs minus the average expenses incurred by charter schools for those same fixed or unique costs. Assumed constant in projections.